

The Honorable Tim Bishop  
Remarks on TWA Flight 800 Amendment to H.R. 5576  
June 13, 2006

Mr. Chairman, nearly a decade ago -- on July 17, 1996 -- the world witnessed one of the worst air disasters in history when TWA Flight 800 crashed off the coast of Long Island, in the Atlantic, just south of my district. All 230 passengers and crew perished.

Today, it's important that we continue to offer our support by joining the surviving families who will recognize the tenth anniversary of that tragedy next month. And we must do all that we can to safeguard the flying public against future disasters.

Like other challenging times our nation has faced, the reaction to the Flight 800 catastrophe brought out the best in not only my constituents but so many others in the surrounding towns, states, and across the nation, who joined New Yorkers in mourning the loss of so many who lost their lives and helped my community recover from its most horrific tragedy.

New Yorkers, indeed all Americans, demonstrated the great human strength and spirit that makes our country prevail in the face of tremendous adversity. Thousands of volunteers and employees of the Coast Guard, U.S. Navy, Army Corps of Engineers and the NTSB searched the waters below where the plane fell in an unprecedented search and recovery effort.

Throughout -- and despite -- their grief, the families of the victims worked tirelessly to build a permanent memorial with the help of Navy Sea-Bees and thousands of dedicated, local building trades union members. Today, this solemn monument spirals along a strip of Long Island's south shore and serves as a constant reminder of our community's tremendous loss one decade ago.

As we approach this milestone, it's important to take stock of our progress in preventing air disasters since Flight 800. From a technological perspective, we've made some great strides toward aviation safety, particularly, for example, with design upgrades and an ongoing effort to mitigate fuel tank flammability, the cause of the Flight 800 crash.

It's also important to once again offer our condolences to the families of the Flight 800 disaster and assure them of our steadfast commitment to safety and of our vigilance against preventable catastrophes.

I yield back the balance of my time.